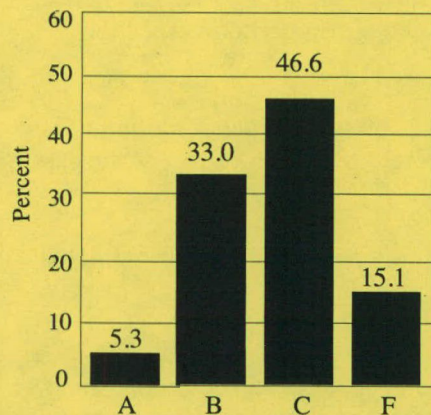


English 33

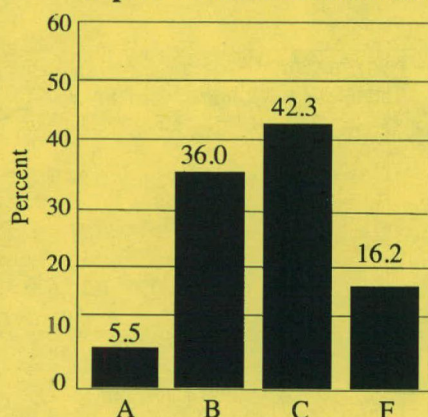
Diploma Examination Results

Examiners' Report for June 1995

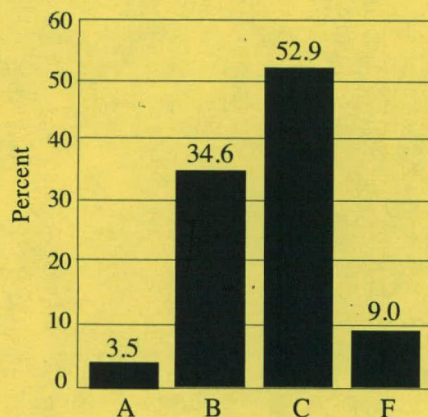
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the public with an overview of results from the June 1995 administration of the English 33 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 33 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each section is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 6 465 students who wrote the June 1995 examination.

- 91.0% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 3.5% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Generally, student achievement in relation to standards in English 33 was satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving the acceptable standard was slightly lower than the proportions in January 1995 and June 1994, but the proportion of students achieving the standard of excellence was slightly higher than it was in January 1995 and June 1994.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 60.1%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 61.4%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 61.3%.

Part A: Written Response

In responding to Part A, students are required to complete three writing assignments, each of which assesses a variety of writing and thinking skills.

In January 1995, the scoring category formerly used to mark Section III was expanded into two categories, named *Thought and Detail* and *Writing Skills*. These new scoring categories can be found on pages 24 and 25 of the *English 33 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examinations Program*, for the 1994–95 school year, which is available in all high schools. Also in January 1995, the two-marker system was adopted for marking Part A, which means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring criteria. (See the following table.)

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing the results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are provided in the bulletin.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels. In June 1995, the average raw score for Part A was 29.3 out of 50.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark(%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent (5)	(4.5)	Proficient (4)	(3.5)	Satisfactory (3)	(2.5)	Limited (2)	(1.5)	Poor (1)	Ins*
Personal Response to Literature The student is required to read a piece of literature and to write a response from a personal perspective.	Thought and Detail	10.0	1.0	1.6	13.3	18.2	38.3	15.5	10.2	1.2	0.5	0.2
	Organization	5.0	0.8	1.5	10.9	17.8	42.3	16.7	8.5	0.8	0.5	0.2
	Matters of Choice	5.0	0.9	1.5	10.6	16.1	46.3	13.4	8.8	1.5	0.5	0.2
	Matters of Correctness	5.0	1.1	2.1	12.0	17.4	35.2	15.5	12.4	2.6	1.5	0.2
Functional Writing The student is required to write a response to a particular situation (e.g., a business letter or speech).	Thought and Detail	10.0	0.9	1.9	10.9	14.5	36.2	17.8	14.8	1.8	0.9	0.4
	Writing Skills	5.0	0.8	1.1	10.2	14.1	38.3	16.6	14.0	3.2	1.3	0.4
Response to Visual Communication The assignment asks the student to respond to a photograph. The student is required to write about main ideas in relation to techniques of visual communication.	Thought and Detail	5.0	0.6	0.9	4.9	6.8	20.6	20.1	33.2	7.5	3.3	2.1
	Writing Skills	5.0	0.5	0.9	5.7	8.6	41.0	18.5	16.6	4.0	2.0	2.1

*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off-topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard on each scoring category.

Examiners' Comments

Section I: Personal Response to Literature

The excerpt from Jamaica Kincaid's novel, *Annie John*, was accessible to most students, and many students were able to relate the assignment topic to meaningful aspects of their personal and literary experience. They explored themes related to a person's learning, early in life, the importance of following through on choices, observing that "seeing things through" shows maturity and responsibility. Many students recognized that choices are challenging and difficult to make and that fear of change can often determine, in a negative way, the course of one's life. Some students noted that "some choices come easy; others will tear us apart inside." Others recognized the personal nature of choices and developed opinions such as, "If you believe in your heart that 'This is the right choice,' follow through on your decision" and "That is the wonderful thing about choices: they are ours to make."

Some students wrote about "following your dream" and missed some of the aspects involved in following through on choices made; however, many of these students did talk about the importance of "considering consequences." Some students limited their discussion to the topic of "decision making."

Other students took an opposing view in responding to the assignment and stated that it is never too late for a person to change his or her mind. These students saw decision making as "a planning process rather than a single point in time." One student, for example, stated that "situations change and so should plans."

Some students placed conditions on the concept of following through on choices made, stating, for example, that it is important for a person to follow through if his or her reputation is at stake or if other people are counting on the one who has made the choice.

Many students wrote about situations from their own lives that required making choices and "following through" on their choices (these ranged from keeping one's baby to learning to play a musical instrument) or making choices and then changing their minds (for example, taking drugs and then abandoning the use of drugs).

"Leaving home" was a prevalent example used by students, probably because it was an issue so vital to students' current concerns as they thought about graduating from high school and embarking on a new phase of their lives. In some cases, this example became the subject of the student's writing and detracted from the assignment's focus of following through on choices.

It was interesting to observe that many students used literature to support their ideas. When using literature for support, many students chose literature from the new Senior High Novels list, for example, *The Chosen*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Jurassic Park*, *Medicine River*.

Students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** demonstrated a defensible understanding of the excerpt and responded to the assignment in a conventional way. Generally, students at this level handled the organization of their compositions in a functional way. Some students moralized about the topic. These students had general control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics.

Students achieving **(4) Proficient**, **(4.5)**, and **(5) Excellent** understood and responded to the subtleties of the selection, such as the idea that the narrator is "trapped" both physically (she is on the boat with nowhere to go) and mentally (she cannot renege on her decision to train as a nurse in England without embarrassing herself or her parents). Their effectively organized responses included introductions purposefully designed to provide direction for the reader. They were able to choose words and manipulate syntax for stylistic effect, and they demonstrated competent and even confident control of Matters of Correctness.

Section II: Functional Writing

In June 1995, the Functional Writing assignment required students to assume the role of the Grade 12 representative on the Nalwen High School Students' Council and to write the speech to be given to Nalwen Town Council on June 16 to persuade council members not to take away the students' parking lot. In their speeches, students were expected to take an appropriate tone, to indicate their purpose, to consider the suggestions made by the students they represented, and, after studying a map of the area, to consider alternative sites for the computer manufacturing company.

Most students understood the assignment and used an appropriately courteous tone. They seemed genuinely interested in this particular assignment and fulfilled the purpose in a variety of ways.

Some students confused the method of closing a speech with the method of closing a letter, for example, signing their speeches and adding "Yours truly." Markers were told to disregard this type of slip.

A few students seemed to have entered the examination room expecting to write a letter and appear to have decided to write a letter in spite of having been asked to write a speech. Markers were asked to consider fulfillment of function and appropriateness of audience awareness when dealing with these types of responses.

Students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** provided enough information to fulfill the purpose of their speeches. Using an appropriate tone, they identified the problem, stated their request, suggested one or two alternative sites (often including reasons why these sites were "better"), and provided closure.

Less successful students wrote brief, often confusing, responses that would have left the Town Councillors guessing about the intent of their speeches.

Students achieving **(4) Proficient**, **(4.5)**, and **(5) Excellent** sustained a precise awareness of audience and an appropriate, often persuasive, tone throughout. Their speeches included specific details that provided Town Councillors with information that would have caused them to reconsider their original decision about the location of the computer manufacturing company.

Section III: Response to Visual Communication

The June 1995 photograph shows an adult Inuit standing straight and proud beside his husky dog. Behind him is an *Inukshuk*, representing his people and his culture. To the right, four young Inuit boys, dressed in colourful modern clothing, are perched on their mountain bikes watching the dog. Behind the boys, the Canadian flag waves over the small community that can be seen in the background.

Most students found this to be a challenging photograph to interpret. Rather than forming generalizations about the meaning of the photograph, many students simply listed details from the photograph or provided speculation about what was "happening" in the world of the photograph (for example, the man and boys were out walking their dog or the boys were preparing to race the husky on their bikes). These students received marks of **(1) Poor** or **(2) Limited** for Thought and Detail.

Other students were able to interpret the photograph and form plausible generalizations, and many of these students were able to support the generalizations that they had formed. One rather remarkable finding was that very few students commented on the fact that the photograph was posed by the photographer rather than candid. Those few students who recognized that the photograph was posed were able to use their understanding of the structure that had been set up by the photographer—the juxtaposition of the "old" and the "new"—to come up with an appropriate generalization that could be supported.

The photograph generated a variety of responses, many of which were reflective of the students' sensitivity. Students developed generalizations about ideas such as "Pride in tradition," "The conflict between the old and the new," "the generation gap," and "The consequences of the white man's invasion on the Inuit people."

It is important to note that, occasionally, at the **(3) Satisfactory** level, the students' interpretations of the photograph were not always consistent with an adult perspective. Some students offered generalizations such as "Children tend to be afraid of large dogs" or "People are afraid of the unknown" and "Sadness results from the hard life in the North," but they were able to make these generalizations "work" by supporting them with details from the photograph.

Most often, students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** interpreted the photograph in a conventional way, using generalized details for support. Some of these students commented upon choices such as juxtaposition and camera angle.

Students achieving **(4) Proficient**, **(4.5)**, and **(5) Excellent** provided well-considered interpretations of the photograph. These students developed ideas such as "The man and the stone statue symbolize a fading, once vibrant culture; the children symbolize an end to this great legacy." These students explained how the details in the photograph and the photographer's choices (for example, use of symbolism, arrangement, perspective, and even "punctum") reinforced their interpretations.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	C	56.9
2	C	71.0
3	A	72.1
4	B	87.8
5	D	81.9
6	D	78.3
7	A	65.4
8	D	92.2
9	A	69.1
10	D	65.3
11	D	60.7
12	C	82.9
13	B	43.1
14	A	82.2
15	B	88.9
16	B	69.5
17	A	83.8
18	A	78.9
19	B	84.7
20	D	77.8
21	A	77.9
22	A	68.6
23	B	73.9
24	B	58.0
25	C	83.1
26	B	64.3
27	C	51.6
28	D	79.5
29	A	51.5
30	C	44.0
31	C	60.5
32	B	59.7
33	A	70.6
34	C	48.1
35	B	50.0
36	D	74.7
37	C	79.6
38	A	48.2
39	D	46.9
40	D	62.2
41	C	49.1
42	B	62.8
43	B	63.5
44	B	51.3
45	C	54.1
46	A	62.8
47	A	66.8
48	D	56.1
49	D	70.8
50	B	68.5
51	C	72.7
52	C	72.7
53	C	52.0
54	A	83.0
55	A	45.8
56	D	51.6
57	D	52.3
58	B	54.3
59	D	52.7
60	A	54.3
61	D	56.0
62	B	57.7
63	A	58.1
64	C	56.1
65	C	59.5
66	C	66.5
67	D	60.9
68	D	48.2
69	A	49.7
70	B	32.8

*Difficulty — percentage of students answering the question correctly

Part B: Reading

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each correct alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks, one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1995 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			Total
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Main Ideas/Details	18, 30	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 20, 25, 32, 38, 47, 55, 57, 58, 63, 66, 67, 68	10, 11, 12, 36, 54, 60	29 Items (21%)
Relationship between Form and Content	34	1, 15, 22, 31, 33, 35, 37, 56, 61, 64, 70	13, 27, 48, 51	16 Items (11%)
Human Experience and Values	49	4, 14, 19, 23, 24, 28, 39, 50, 52, 59, 62, 69	21, 26, 29, 53, 65	18 Items (13%)
Knowledge of Revision and Editing	40, 44	41, 42, 43, 45, 46		7 Items (5%)
Total	6 Items (4%)	49 Items (35%)	15 Items (11%)	70 Items (50%)

Subtest Results*

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 44.9 out of 70

Course Content

- Main Ideas/Details: 19.5 out of 29
- Relationship between Form and Content: 9.4 out of 16
- Human Experience and Values: 11.9 out of 18
- Knowledge of Revision and Editing: 4.1 out of 7

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

Examiners' Comments

Standards

During the marking session, a committee of five English 33 teachers reviewed Part B to determine whether the standards embedded in the readings and questions were appropriate and fair, relative to curricular and public expectations. The committee members generally concurred that the examination set an appropriate standard of achievement for graduating English 33 students. Generally, they found the reading selections to be relevant, challenging, and engaging, and the questions to be appropriate and fair. These teachers believed that the excerpt from *Monkeyshines* and the short story, "Sundays," were particularly appropriate for English 33.

Detailed Discussion

The following table gives results for six multiple-choice questions. These six questions were chosen to represent the range of difficulty (32.8 to 92.2) present in Part B. These six questions also represent all of the question types that appear in the blueprint on page 5. Questions 24, 40, and 60 should be of particular interest for teachers since the teachers who reviewed Part B as standards confirmers asked that these three questions be included in the discussion.

For each question, statistics are given for three student groups. The comments following the table discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number					
	8	24	40	60	61	70
All Students	92.2	58.0	62.2	54.3	56.0	32.8
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	99.7	81.1	78.0	84.7	81.1	80.2
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	92.0	52.5	58.9	48.4	51.1	22.7

8. The phrase "all wiry with thoughts" (line 68) supports the statement
- A. "She was shy in groups" (line 44)
 - B. "He was always calling her" (lines 45–46)
 - C. "She did most of the talking" (line 47)
 - D. "Her mind was always ticking" (line 58)

Question 8 was one of a set of ten questions on the short story "Sundays," by Ellen Wilbur. This question was classified under the Reporting Category *Main Ideas/Details* of the English 33 Diploma Examination blueprint for Part B.

Question 8 was the easiest question on Part B, with 92.2% of the students answering correctly. Even 76.6% of the students who failed the exam managed to answer question 8 correctly. It is pleasing to note that nearly all of the students were able to associate "wiry" from the stem with "always ticking" from alternative D (and "thoughts" with "mind") to correctly determine that the phrase from the stem and statement in alternative D were similar.

24. The underlying reason that Dorothy describes her former classmates as “baked apples” (line 141) is her

- A. unstable family relationships
 - B. frustration with her physical appearance
 - C. distress at not recognizing her classmates
 - D. concern about the decline in her classmates’ mental abilities
-

Question 24 was one of a set of eleven questions on an excerpt from the play *Monkeyshines* by Suzanne Finlay. This question was classified under the Reporting Category *Human Experience and Values*, and called for close reading from the students—the word “underlying” in the stem being of crucial importance to an understanding of the intent of the question. All of Dorothy’s actions and reactions in the excerpt centre on her own physical appearance. She is exercising and dying her hair in an attempt to hold the process of aging at bay. Most of her humour is directed at herself and is also centred on aging. Her *underlying* motivation stems from her frustration with her own physical appearance and her own aging.

Question 24 was relatively challenging with only 58.0% of the students answering correctly, but it discriminated highly between students who did well on the exam and those who did less well. Only 34.3% of the students who failed the exam answered question 24 correctly; 39.2% of these students chose “C. distress at not recognizing her classmates” as the correct answer.

40. In paragraph 1, a common spelling error that Robin has not yet corrected is

- A. here
 - B. already
 - C. its
 - D. alot
-

Question 40 was one of a set of seven questions that was designed to test students’ knowledge of revision and editing. These questions were classified under the Reporting Category *Knowledge of Revision and Editing*. In answering questions such as this, students are required to make decisions about appropriate revisions to a piece of writing.

While this question was of average difficulty (62.2% of the students answered correctly), the teachers who acted as Part B standards confirmers were alarmed about this result. They expected the question to be an easy one.

Nearly 25% of the students chose “C. its” as the correct answer to question 40, perhaps believing that, since “its” is a possessive, it should include an apostrophe. It is important for English 33 students to be aware of the common errors that they make so that they can detect these errors and correct them in their own writing. Markers of Part A certainly see many such errors in the writing of English 33 students.

Questions 60 and 61 were two of a set of eight questions on the poem “Autobiographical Note,” by Vernon Scannell.

60. The **main** idea of the poem is that

- A. good and evil are not necessarily absolutes
 - B. introspection causes adults to long for the past
 - C. children tend to be more aggressive than adults
 - D. movies provide good entertainment for the young
-

Question 60 was classified under the Reporting Category *Main Ideas/Details*. It asked students to use their powers of judgement to select the main idea of the poem from a list of ideas that are, each to some degree, being developed by the poet.

Question 60, while challenging, discriminated highly between students who did well on the exam and students who did less well; 84.7% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence answered question 60 correctly, while only 48.4% of the students who scored between 50% and 64% answered it correctly. Only 34.2% of the students who failed the exam got question 60 right; the most popular choice of these students was “C. children tend to be more aggressive than adults.”

61. To reinforce his main idea, the speaker uses a metaphor in

- A. "Each Saturday at two-o'clock / We queued up for the matinée" (lines 3-4)
- B. "The natural enemies of cops / And schoolteachers" (lines 8-9)
- C. "the reek of chewing-gum, / Gob-stoppers and liquorice" (lines 15-16)
- D. "The hero was / A milky wide-brimmed hat, a shape / Astride the arched white stallion" (lines 18-20)

Question 61 was classified under the Reporting Category *Relationships of Form and Content*. To answer correctly, students had to recognize the metaphor or metonymy in the poet's use of the white hat to represent the cowboy hero and to understand that the stereotypes of hero and villain, good and evil, were being questioned by the poet.

A high proportion of the students who achieved the standard of excellence—81.1%—answered this question correctly. Only 33.7% of the students who failed the exam answered correctly.

70. The name that Miss Mebbin gave to her cottage and her choice of plants for her garden serve to reflect

- A. her appreciation of nature
- B. the source of her good fortune
- C. her regret for the tiger's death
- D. the change in character she has experienced

Question 70 was one of a set of nine questions on "Mrs. Packeltide's Tiger" by Saki. It was classified under the Reporting Category *Relationships of Form and Content*. It was the most difficult question on Part B with only 32.8% of the students answering correctly. It was also one of the most highly discriminating questions on the exam; 80.2% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence answered it correctly, as did 44.6% of the students scoring between 65% and 79%, 22.7% of the students scoring between 50% and 64%, and 16.9% of the students scoring 49% or less.

To get question 70 correct, students had to read the footnote interpreting "Les Fauves" as the Big Cats and to appreciate that this name and the tiger-lilies reflected Miss Mebbin's self-acknowledgment of her blackmail of Mrs. Packeltide.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

While it is **not intended** that Parts A and B of the English 33 Diploma Examination be considered to be separate exams, it is **interesting** to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	3.1%	18.5%
B	22.1%	32.8%
C	57.9%	29.3%
F	16.9%	19.4%

In June 1995, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" category on Part B of the examination than on Part A. The scarcity of scores of 80% and above on Part A does not signal a new phenomenon; in the past, few students have scored at this level on Part A.

For further information, contact Tom Dunn, Gloria Malick, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010.

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